

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Please replace drawing sheet 5/5 with the attached replacement sheet. In drawing sheet 5/5, step S506 has been amended to recite "MASK IMAGE."

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for the careful consideration given the present application. The application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office action, and amended as necessary to more clearly and particularly describe the subject matter that applicants regards as the invention.

The Office action requires the correction of a typographical error in drawing sheet 5/5. Drawing sheet 5/5 has been amended accordingly.

The Office action requires a new title of the invention. The title of the invention has been amended accordingly.

The Office action objects to claim 3 due to an informality, which has been corrected by the present amendment.

Claims 1-7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Iijima in view of Andaashu. Applicants respectfully submit that Iijima does not disclose a combination object image holding unit which holds the combination object image which is picked up in accordance with the mask image displayed on the display. In Iijima, the object image (e.g., face of a human) is masked to obtain a cut-out image, and the obtained cut-out image is superposed on the background image to form a desired image (see Figs. 11 and 13). On the other hand, in the present invention, the mask image is displayed on the base image (background image) to pick up the object image, thereby obtaining a desired image. See, for example, Fig. 3, in which the mask image (crosshatch) is displayed on the base image (church and trees) and the object images (faces) are picked up to obtain the desired image. Therefore, it is possible to pick up the object image on the base image so as to obtain the desired image. In Iijima, cut-out images are superposed on background images, rather than directly picked up on the background images.

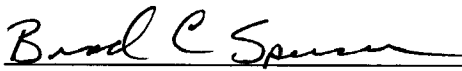
Further, Iijima does not disclose a plurality of types of mask images corresponding to the base image. In Iijima, since only one mask pattern corresponds to a background image, there is no chance to combine plural object images with the background image. On the other hand, in the present invention, plural mask images correspond to the base image. Therefore, it is possible, for example, to obtain an image in which plural object images are combined into an identical background image.

For all of the reasons discussed above, applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is allowable over the cited references. Claims 2-7 depend from claim 1.

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance and notice to that effect is hereby requested. If it is determined that the application is not in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to initiate a telephone interview with the undersigned attorney to expedite prosecution of the present application.

If there are any additional fees resulting from this communication, please charge same to our Deposit Account No. 16-0820, our Order No. NGB-38036.

Respectfully submitted,
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